



# Historically Speaking

The Newsletter of the Cobourg and  
District Historical Society

April 2011 — Issue 243

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## **Historic Rarities:**

### **Cobourg's Story Recorded in Objects**

The Cobourg and District Historical Society invites you to join us for our Annual General Meeting. After our AGM three passionate collectors – Dean Elliott, Terry Barker and Dorothy De Lisle – will share their love for Cobourg memorabilia as they present their treasures.

Join us in the Citizens' Forum, Victoria Hall, on Tuesday, April 26. Doors open at 7:30 and the presentation begins at 8:00.

All are welcome so bring a friend!

## Our next meeting:

May 31, 2011 Note date change!	Dorothy Duncan	Feasting and Fasting: Canada's Heritage Celebrations
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## From the Archives

*Name That Building*



*Photograph courtesy of the CDHSA*

Where in Cobourg is this building? See May's Historically Speaking for the answer!

*World War One Soldier's Letters*, as published in the *Cobourg World 1914 – 1919*,  
compiled by Percy L. Climo, CDHSA 2006.1003.180

The Cobourg World, Friday April 6, 1917. Page 1:4

## **LETTERS FROM MEN AT THE FRONT**

Donald Ross Only Slightly Wounded.

No. 20, France, March 5, 1917

Dear Mother. : --

Here I am, going to write you a few lines. Likely before you read this you will get a report that I have been slightly wounded --but very slightly. I was hit by a piece of shrapnel about three-quarters of an inch long and about one eighth of an inch square. It hit me on the right shoulder. You know the clasp on my braces, well that stopped it. I found the piece imbedded in the clasp, consequently all I got was a bad bruise. But I had to go to the field hospital and be inoculated to prevent blood poisoning and on account of going to the hospital, I will be reported as slightly wounded. I am only off duty forty-eight hours. So you can see, I am not by any means badly hurt, but pretty badly frightened.

I am the first of the 139th boys in this Battalion to get hit and I have not heard of any getting hit who were sent to the other Battalions.

I received your last letter some time ago, but have been so busy that I have not found time to answer before now. However, I hope you get this letter in time to relieve your mind, and let you know that I am still the old hale and hearty chap.

# The Woman Who Mapped Labrador

*Jackie Hick*

Most of us are familiar with the lives of sisters Susannah Moodie and Catharine Parr Traill, two English gentlewomen, who struggled for survival, both as pioneer wives and aspiring authors, in the hills of Northumberland County in the early nineteenth century. Fewer of us have, however, encountered the fascinating history of another local heroine, Mina Benson Hubbard, born in 1870 on a farm just south of Rice Lake, who more than a century ago journeyed nearly 600 miles by canoe along the rivers of Labrador.

Mina Benson Hubbard first caught my attention a couple of years ago while I was hiking along the Cavan Road in Bewdley. At the roadside I came upon a handsome plaque erected in 1996 by the Township of Hamilton, with the assistance of the Ontario Heritage Foundation and the Cobourg and District Historical Society. The plaque reads:

MINA BENSON

(1870 – 1956)

AN EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY CANADIAN FEMALE EXPLORER OF LABRADOR AND WRITER, MINA BENSON WAS BORN ON THIS PROPERTY, LOT 28, CONCESSION 7, TOWNSHIP OF HAMILTON, COUNTY OF NORTHUMBERLAND. FROM JUNE 27 TO AUGUST 27, 1905, BENSON COMPLETED THE ILL-FATED 1903 LABRADOR EXPEDITION OF HER LATE HUSBAND, LEONIDAS HUBBARD JR., A DISTANCE OF 576 MILES FROM THE NORTHWEST RIVER TO UNGAVA BAY. HER MAPS, ACCEPTED BY THE AMERICAN GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY, WERE SOME OF THE FIRST TO RECORD THE NASKAUPI RIVER AND GEORGE RIVER SYSTEMS. IN 1908 SHE PUBLISHED AN ACCOUNT OF HER TRIP, A WOMAN'S WAY THROUGH UNKNOWN LABRADOR. LATER SHE REMARRIED, HAD THREE CHILDREN AND MOVED TO ENGLAND, WHERE SHE DIED.

At our book sale at last month's meeting I was delighted to acquire – in pristine condition – a copy of “The Woman who Mapped Labrador, the Life and Expedition Diary of Mina Hubbard,” by Roberta Buchanan, Anne Hart, and Bryan Greene. This book is a treasure – from the striking cover design, the generous use of maps throughout the diary section, the excellent writing to many fascinating photographs, including one of Mina in a stylish hat and long skirts, climbing into her canoe.

Mina was an amazing woman with great determination and energy Her second marriage to an English aristocrat took her to England where she became an accomplished public speaker, part of London's intellectual scene, and involved with women's suffrage and other issues of the day. She died at the age of 86, having accidentally stepped in front of a train while on one of her frequent walks.

Ann Hart, one of the authors, acknowledged the contribution of former CDHS member Donna McGillis. On page *xix* of the book, Hart writes: “In Bewdley, Donna McGillis, a most knowledgeable local historian, twice took me under her wing in the role of guide to the landscape of Mina's earlier life and antecedents, and later gave me much assistance by letter.”

I can't wait for this month's book sale. Who knows what gems will be on offer?

## **Notes and Notices**

### ***CDHS Dues***

Your annual CDHS membership fees are now due. Please send a cheque to Martha Watson, 381 Ontario Street, Cobourg, ON K9A 3B9 or pay at our next meeting.

### ***Heart of Northumberland Garden Tour***

The Heart of Northumberland Garden Tour takes place on Sunday, June 26, 2011, from 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. in the lovely countryside near Cobourg. Included in the tour is a serene heritage homestead, built circa 1880 on a hill in Baltimore and offering breathtaking panoramic views. Long before the land was cleared by Irish immigrants, this was the site of an ancient native burial ground.

Tickets are \$25 and will be available starting May 1<sup>st</sup> from Pineridge Nursery and Cobourg Paint and Wallpaper. For more information please call 905-885-6422 or visit [www.heartofnorthumberland.ca](http://www.heartofnorthumberland.ca).

### ***The CDHS History Book Sale Continues!***

We have received a generous donation of 25 books from our March speaker, Catherine Milne. There's something for everyone. These books, all in mint condition, will pique a great deal of interest. Titles include:

Sisters in Two Worlds, Forest and other Gleanings and various other titles by or about Traill and Moodie, Small but Bountiful – the Rice Lake Story, Going to Town – Architectural Walks in Southern Ontario, Rolling Hills of Northumberland – A County History. In addition, we have a number of out of print books about Cobourg and many other titles of general interest from which to choose.

Please continue to **bring** your no longer wanted history related books and **buy** others! Your donations and purchases assist in the day-to-day expenses of running our society.

### ***Ontario Heritage Conference***

The Ontario Heritage Conference is being held in Cobourg on June 3-5. Complete information regarding the conference programme and registration information can be found at [www.cobourgtourism.ca/heritage.htm](http://www.cobourgtourism.ca/heritage.htm). You can register on-line or by telephone to 905-372-1005 x4455 or 1-888-262-6874.

Briefly, the conference includes a keynote address, panel discussions, various concurrent sessions, a downtown walking tour, a reception at the Art Gallery of Northumberland, a dinner at the Yacht Club, a ghost walk, a bus tour of heritage landmarks with a picnic lunch at Barnum House, and an optional tour to Port Hope followed by a dinner at a Cobourg restaurant in Cobourg. These events take place on June 3 and 4. On June 5, the Annual General Meetings of the ACO and the CHO take place.

Registration for the full conference is \$250 (\$300 after May 1). One-day registrations are also available. Lunch and dinner vouchers are provided for June 3 and the picnic lunch on June 4 is included in the fee. Morning and afternoon nutrition breaks are provided on June 3 and 4.

This is an opportunity to hear and perhaps meet thought leaders in the heritage field on our very doorstep. We hope many of our members will be able to attend.

## ***Submissions***

The CDHS Newsletter welcomes submissions – short articles, announcements, book reviews, letters to the editor, etc. – that will be of interest to members in the Cobourg area. Articles should generally be limited to 300 words although exceptions can be made. Submissions should be sent to the editor at 24 Pebble Beach Drive, Cobourg, ON, K9A 2C5 or by email to [newsletter@cdhs.ca](mailto:newsletter@cdhs.ca).

## **CDHS Executive for 2010 – 2011**

Acting President	David Gregory	<a href="mailto:president@cdhs.ca">president@cdhs.ca</a>
Vice President	Ken Strauss	<a href="mailto:vp@cdhs.ca">vp@cdhs.ca</a>
Acting Treasurer	David Gregory	
Recording Secretary	Jackie Hick	<a href="mailto:secretary@cdhs.ca">secretary@cdhs.ca</a>
Correspondence	Norma McGrath	
Archives Chair	Cath Oberholtzer	<a href="mailto:archiveschair@cdhs.ca">archiveschair@cdhs.ca</a>
Membership	Martha Watson	<a href="mailto:membership@cdhs.ca">membership@cdhs.ca</a>
Programme	Judith Goulin	<a href="mailto:programme@cdhs.ca">programme@cdhs.ca</a>
Newsletter Editor	Ken Strauss	<a href="mailto:newsletter@cdhs.ca">newsletter@cdhs.ca</a>
Past President	Libby Seekings	

**Mark your calendars for Tuesday May 31st!**

Be enlightened and entertained!

**Dorothy Duncan**

Renowned heritage food expert will speak on

**“Feasting and Fasting: Canada’s Heritage Celebrations”**

**Tuesday, May 31**

**3:00 pm**

**Cobourg Yacht Club**

**100 Third Street**

**hors d’œuvre, coffee and tea**

**A cash bar will be available**

**\$20.00 per person**

**Tickets may be purchased at our April 26 meeting**

*or at*

**66 King Street East**

*or from*

**Judith Goulin, 905 372 7684**